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S E C R E T ABUJA 001684

SIPDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/29/2013

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SUBJECT: WARRI UPDATE: REPORTED MILITARY CLASHES WITH IJAW

REF: A. ABUJA 1656

[B](#). DAO ABUJA IIR 6 871 0168 03 (25SEP03).

Classified by Political Counselor James Maxstadt for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) The September 29 Nigerian newspaper "The Vanguard" reported that a military unit of the Joint Task Force fought with Ijaw youth at Jones Creek Island over the weekend, leaving four people dead and several others injured. Ijaw NGO activist Joel Bisina told CRO September 29 that on September 25 or 26 a military Joint Task Force unit approached the Jones Creek area with orders to attack and destroy surrounding Ijaw villages. According to Bisina, "Ijaw leaders" intervened with military commanders in Abuja to break off the military action, but not before one village was completely destroyed.

[1](#)2. (C/NF) Captain Femi Ogunjimi, Commander of the "NNS Delta" Nigerian Navy unit in Warri, told a U.S. NGO representative in Warri September 26 that a unit of the Joint Task Force executing "Operation Restore Hope" had clashed with an Ijaw community in the Warri creeks. It may have been the same incident at Jones Creek. Captain Ogunjimi would not identify the location, but claimed one Navy soldier had been injured and was now being treated in a clinic in Warri. The Captain did not know the number of casualties, if any, on the Ijaw community's side, and none of our other sources could give us a firm number different from that in the "Vanguard" newspaper story.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Comment: These sketchy reports seem in line with the DAO Abuja's report (Ref B) that a military operation is now underway in the Delta. All contacts report the situation in Warri is extremely tense.

MEECE